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"NASTY"[1] WOMAN AND "VERY HAPPY YOUNG GIRL"[2]: THE POLITICAL CULTURE OF WOMEN IN DONALD TRUMP'S AMERICA

JOHN BAICK*

Discussions of gender and politics in the present day must include a consideration of the charged atmosphere of our political culture. Americans were embroiled in culture wars for much of the twentieth century—conflicts that included the right of women to vote, the civil rights of African Americans and other minority groups, and the meaning of sexuality. New debates have been added in the last few years—many of which center on gender, sexuality, and race. The culture wars have reached a fevered peak with the election and administration of Donald Trump. Yet Trump himself does not represent a new front in the culture wars, but what might be a climactic battle between the forces of the past and the future of the American nation.

The title of this piece is drawn from presidential pronouncements on the meaning of women in public life—the first a tried-and-true insult reserved mostly for offending women, and the second a sarcastic critique that Trump directed towards the teenage global warming activist Greta Thunberg. This Article will focus on the front lines that these two insults represent in our culture wars. What does it mean to be a woman and a

1. Liam Quinn, *Fox News Exclusive: Trump Launches Blistering Attack on "Nasty, Vindictive, Horrible" Pelosi*, FOX NEWS (June 6, 2019), https://www.foxnews.com/politics/president-donald-trump-nancy-pelosi-nasty-vindictive-horrible-person-fox-news-exclusive [https://perma.cc/22PJ-2PG9].

2. Kate Lyons, *"She Seems Very Happy": Trump Appears to Mock Greta Thunberg's Emotional Speech*, GUARDIAN (Sept. 24, 2019), https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/sep/24/she-seems-very-happy-trump-appears-to-mock-greta-thunbergs-emotional-speech [https://perma.cc/TX3K-2BC8].

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citizen and a political actor, and in a larger sense, what does it means to be an American in Trump's America?

INTRODUCTION

Consider a brief anecdote about the American president. He is best known for his vague speeches, his lack of attention to governance, his appointment of corrupt friends, and his extramarital relations. He is Warren G. Harding. But beyond wondering whether he has been reincarnated, his relation to this Article is his specific contribution to our political culture.

Near the beginning of his inaugural address in 1921, Harding reflected upon the moment: "Standing in this presence, mindful of the solemnity of this occasion, feeling the emotions which no one may know until he senses the great weight of responsibility for himself, I must utter my belief in the divine inspiration of the founding fathers."[3]

The term "founding fathers" (often capitalized as Founding Fathers) was not commonly used until then-Senator Harding used it in his Republican Party National Convention keynote address in 1916. He would use it again in his own inaugural address in 1921.[4] Before this, the term "founders" had been commonly used to refer to the Revolutionary generation. But in 1916, with the madness of the Great War raging in Europe and the madness of women's suffrage raging at home, Harding first turned to a comforting, catchy, alliterative phrase that evoked the image of an American male pantheon that was far above the barbarism of trenches and suffragettes.

And in 1921, at the moment when women's votes had finally been allowed in a presidential election, he reminded women explicitly that he was now on that separate, higher, and thoroughly masculine plane of political existence. American politics was now open to women. Our political culture was far less welcoming.

Political culture is a vague concept. It can be defined as the ideas, attitudes, and language that relate to the political life of a society. It is also a barometer for understanding our nation. For example, terms like "socialized medicine" and "death panels" can sometimes shape the political debate over healthcare far more than the actual details of policies.

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3. Warren G. Harding, Inaugural Address (Mar. 4, 1921), https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/harding.asp [https://perma.cc/V2DD-SKR3].

4. JILL LEPORE, THE WHITES OF THEIR EYES: THE TEA PARTY'S REVOLUTION AND THE BATTLE OVER AMERICAN HISTORY 16 (2010).

American political culture is probably clearest in the pronouncements of presidents. President Nixon's praise of "the Silent Majority" was a political dog whistle[5] masquerading as a campaign slogan, an invocation of a time before the movements of the 1950s and 1960s questioned the post-World War II status quo. President Reagan's re-election slogan of "Morning in America"[6] is a good way of understanding the overwhelming victory he enjoyed,[7] hinting at how he had reset the clock back to the 1950s or even 1920s. This was only one of many phrases that Reagan used, including "Make America Great Again."[8]

Donald Trump has made redefining our political culture the centerpiece of his presidency. Incredibly important court picks, tax cuts, deregulation, foreign policy—all are folded into the deluge of tweets and speeches and pronouncements in which he tries to shape public opinion, the political narrative, and reality itself. He does it in a way that is part Orwellian doublespeak,[9] and part *New York Post*, faux-populist bombast.[10]

His earliest forays into shaping our political culture were racist, with calls to execute the Central Park Five in 1989[11] and, beginning in 2011, questioning the citizenship of President Obama.[12] He continued this

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5. In politics, a dog whistle is a message that some can hear and others cannot. For example, "states' rights" is still used today to invoke the battles of the Civil Rights Movement, a message that states should be allowed to continue racist policies without interference from the federal government. To those who do not hear the message, "states' rights" can just be an anodyne reference to federalism.

6. *Ronald Reagan: "Morning in America,"* WASH. POST (Sept. 10, 2018, 2:21 PM), https://www.washingtonpost.com/video/politics/ronald-reagan-morning-in-america-campaign-1984/2018/09/10/e42baddc-b525-11e8-ae4f-2c1439c96d79_video.html [https://perma.cc/HU43-E3L9].

7. *See* Michael Beschloss, *The Ad That Helped Reagan Sell Good Times to an Uncertain Nation*, N.Y. TIMES (May 7, 2016), https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/08/business/the-ad-that-helped-reagan-sell-good-times-to-an-uncertain-nation.html [https://perma.cc/E6PR-8T36].

8. *See* Lynn Vavreck, *Trump's Approach Is More Like Reagan's than You Might Think*, N.Y. TIMES (Sept. 16, 2015), https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/17/upshot/trump-may-be-more-like-reagan-than-you-think.html [https://perma.cc/NF9W-LVXY].

9. *See* Adam Gopnik, *Orwell's "1984" and Trump's America*, NEW YORKER (Jan. 27, 2017), https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/orwells-1984-and-trumps-america [https://perma.cc/XC3R-YUE3].

10. *See* Jack Shafer, *Donald Trump, the Tabloid Candidate*, POLITICO (Jan. 23, 2016), https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/01/donald-trump-tabloid-candidate-213555 [https://perma.cc/C6V3-HN4P].

11. *See* Lisa W. Foderaro, *Angered by Attack, Trump Urges Return of the Death Penalty*, N.Y. TIMES (May 1, 1989), https://www.nytimes.com/1989/05/01/nyregion/angered-by-attack-trump-urges-return-of-the-death-penalty.html [https://perma.cc/GW73-YWGZ].

12. *See* Chris Megerian, *What Donald Trump Has Said Though the Years About Where President Obama Was Born*, L.A. TIMES (Sept. 16, 2016, 1:20 PM),

theme throughout the 2016 campaign and into his presidency, targeting—among others—Muslims and Mexicans.[13]

What Trump does best is define people and concepts—and his efforts have been magnified by the entertainment and news media, by Facebook and other social media, and by a bully pulpit that has never had a more active bully.[14] (Teddy Roosevelt did not mean that kind of bully when he coined the term, but he was a bully by our standards of the word,[15] so why not throw some historical "shade"?) Trump learned directly from some of the most adept at shaping our political culture in mentors like Roy Cohn[16] and Rupert Murdoch.

He is probably not the Manchurian candidate,[17] although he might be the Ukrainian/Russian candidate.[18] He is not a political pioneer. Instead, he is drawing on our nation's past to define our political culture. Throughout his long and very public life, he has made a consistent effort to define the meaning and role of women in American life.

To understand how he draws on the past, it is best to start with the year of his birth. In 1946, the United States had just emerged relatively unscathed from World War II, with the ability to split atoms, reshape international borders, and build alliances. The United States also had the magical ability to tell millions of women that their wartime contributions

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https://www.latimes.com/politics/la-na-pol-trump-birther-timeline-20160916-snap-htmlstory.html [https://perma.cc/Y696-2MKN].

13. *See* Clare Foran, *Donald Trump and the Rise of Anti-Muslim Violence*, ATLANTIC (Sept. 22, 2016), https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/09/trump-muslims-islamophobia-hate-crime/500840/ [https://perma.cc/6YNG-699K].

14. *See* Ron Elving, *Trump Puts a Twist on the Meaning of "Bully Pulpit"*, NPR (July 4, 2017, 10:00 AM), https://www.npr.org/2017/07/04/535429508/trump-s-weekend-gives-twist-to-meaning-of-bully-pulpit [https://perma.cc/AD4B-VC32].

15. When Theodore Roosevelt coined the term "bully pulpit," the word "bully" meant "good." *See* Michael Patrick Cullinane, *A (Near) Great President: Theodore Roosevelt as the First Modern President*, *in* PERSPECTIVES ON PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP: AN INTERNATIONAL VIEW OF THE WHITE HOUSE 73, 80 (Michael Patrick Cullinane & Clare Frances Elliott eds., 2014).

16. Robert O'Harrow, Jr. & Shawn Boburg, *The Man Who Showed Donald Trump How to Exploit Power and Instill Fear*, WASH. POST (June 17, 2016), https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/former-mccarthy-aide-showed-trump-how-to-exploit-power-and-draw-attention/2016/06/16/e9f44f20-2bf3-11e6-9b37-42985f6a265c_story.html [https://perma.cc/9G8W-EPAH].

17. *See generally* RICHARD CONDON, THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE (1959).

18. *See generally* Travis M. Andrews, *Some Call Trump a "Manchurian Candidate." Here's Where the Phrase Originated*, WASH. POST (Jan. 13, 2017, 6:51 AM), https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2017/01/13/some-call-trump-a-manchurian-candidate-heres-where-the-phrase-originated/ [https://perma.cc/RXT9-CFEZ].

have been noted, but that they should not let the door hit them as they left the factories that won World War II.

Betty Friedan would look back at this time and chart the construction of *The Feminine Mystique*.[19] Suburbs were being built, and women were given a name—housewives—appropriate to an era of mass-produced houses. Living memories of suffragettes, of Amelia Earhart, of Rosie the Riveter, and wartime nurses in burn wards were being overwhelmed by new images of domesticity and new old myths of what a woman should and could do. The G.I. Bill would become one of the greatest forces in economic mobility in American history, but that bill was limited to men, and really to white men since most black veterans would have a hard time actually using the government benefit.[20]

To Donald Trump, the year of his birth was definitely a time when America was great. Did Trump win despite all of his pronouncements? Or did he win because of them? The answer is somewhere in between, but it is likely that many Americans—especially Trump voters—wished that America in 2016 could go back to 1946, to a different economy and society and national identity. But it is not simply a matter of nostalgia. Trump is not trapped in the year of his birth or even childhood. He is a misogynist,[21] but he is not opposed to women participating in politics, business, and society. He clearly sees his daughter as his heir, he values the counsel and opinions of women like Kellyanne Conway and Ann Coulter, and he appointed women to high-profile positions in the Trump Organization.[22] He also clearly picked up and promptly exploited some of the new sexual attitudes of the 1960s and 1970s.[23]

But when a woman steps out of a prescribed role, his attacks, his scorn, and his disgust emerge. If a woman fits his type—his stereotype—then she can be respected. If she gets out of her lane, he will try to push

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19. *See generally* BETTY FRIEDAN, THE FEMININE MYSTIQUE (1963).

20. *See generally* IRA KATZNELSON, WHEN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION WAS WHITE: AN UNTOLD HISTORY OF RACIAL INEQUALITY IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICA (2005).

21. *See* Claire Cohen, *Donald Trump Sexism Tracker: Every Offensive Comment in One Place*, TELEGRAPH (July 14, 2017, 9:03 AM), https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/politics/donald-trump-sexism-tracker-every-offensive-comment-in-one-place/ [https://perma.cc/4GQH-36DJ].

22. *See* Frances Stead Sellers, *Donald Trump, a Champion of Women? His Female Employees Think So.*, WASH. POST (Nov. 24, 2015), https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/donald-trump-a-champion-of-women-his-female-employees-think-so/2015/11/23/7eafac80-88da-11e5-9a07-453018f9a0ec_story.html [https://perma.cc/SR2T-MXA8].

23. *See* David A. Graham, *The Many Scandals of Donald Trump: A Cheat Sheet*, ATLANTIC (Jan. 23, 2017), https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/01/donald-trump-scandals/474726/ [https://perma.cc/5FPH-6SNT].

her back to 1946. To understand American political culture as it has been reshaped by President Trump, we need to see women through the eyes of Donald Trump.

A quick example: when many Americans see the Statue of Liberty, they see the hope of liberty, of an American dream that says you can come here from anywhere and be who you want to be. President Trump sees a woman on a pedestal, where she belongs. She is also a woman who, in addition to knowing her place, knows how to dress like a lady and knows how to keep her mouth shut. Cheap shot? Perhaps. Was it cheap for tens of thousands of baseball fans to boo the President in the fall of 2019?[24] Or was it a sign that there are limits to how far he can shape the political culture?

This study will consider the type of woman that President Trump thinks is appropriate, but it will focus on the type of woman he attacks as he tries to shape our political culture—the women who are "animals," the "nasty women"—the opposite of "very happy young girls."

I. WOMEN AS ANIMALS/PUBLIC "SERVANTS"

The idea that Trump dehumanizes women has been widely noted.[25] What worked to get laughs on the radio broadcasts of Howard Stern or headlines in the *New York Post* continued onto the campaign trail and in the White House.[26] There are times when it seems like Trump talks about women as if they are prized livestock, or competitors in some sort of pageant that objectifies women by evaluating their physical characteristics and the blandness of their views on political issues. When women fail to comport themselves to Trump's apparent standard, his attacks begin.

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24. *See* Rachel E. Greenspan, *President Trump Was Booed at the World Series Game and People in the Crowd Chanted "Lock Him Up"*, TIME (Oct. 28, 2019), https://time.com/5712054/trump-booed-nationals-game/ [https://perma.cc/8NVU-W5NH].

25. *See, e.g.*, Robin Givhan, *A Thorough, Revolting History of Trump's Behavior Toward Women*, WASH. POST (Oct. 23, 2019, 12:02 PM), https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/a-thorough-revolting-history-of-trumps-behavior-toward-women/2019/10/23/3dea9ac4-d00d-11e9-b29b-a528dc82154a_story.html [https://perma.cc/XSC8-484M]; Stef W. Kight, *A List of Trump's Attacks on Prominent Women*, Axios (Oct. 16, 2017), https://www.axios.com/a-list-of-trumps-attacks-on-prominent-women-1513303964-8ef61562-4dcc-4cf0-aea6-0ec89457fbc1.html [https://perma.cc/SUG7-JC2D]; Michael D. Shear & Eileen Sullivan, *"Horseface," "Lowlife," "Fat, Ugly": How the President Demeans Women*, N.Y. TIMES (Oct. 16, 2018), https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/16/us/politics/trump-women-insults.html [https://perma.cc/Z9HS-BNCQ].

26. *See* Kight, *supra* note 26.

Trump mocked Hillary Clinton's appearance and her inability to "satisfy" her husband as a sign that she could not "satisfy" the country.[27] Her decades of political experience at all levels, her intellect, her service to the country—none of these mattered if she failed as brood stock.

He denied that he had insulted a Venezuelan Miss Universe winner, Alicia Machado, when she said that he mocked her weight gain with the name "Miss Piggy" and with racists jabs at being "Miss Housekeeping."[28] He quickly undermined his denial by complaining that "[s]he gained a massive amount of weight, and it was a real problem. We had a real problem. Not only that, her attitude."[29] Apparently, in Trump's estimation, Ms. Machado was a prize mare whose value had been diminished and who needed to be put out to pasture.

And he mocked many women who dared to question or criticize him. Rosie O'Donnell was a "pig."[30] Stephanie Clifford (better known as Stormy Daniels), an alleged paramour of Trump while his wife Melania was caring for their newborn son,[31] was a "[h]orseface."[32] His one-time supporter and former *The Apprentice* contestant Omarosa Manigault Newman was "that dog."[33] They are useless animals, not worthy of judging, certainly not worth listening to.

Fox News anchor Megyn Kelly "had blood coming out of her wherever" after she asked difficult questions during a presidential

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27. *See* Kight, *supra* note 26 ("If Hillary Clinton can't satisfy her husband what makes her think she can satisfy America?").

28. Michael Barbaro & Megan Twohey, *Shamed and Angry: Alicia Machado, a Miss Universe Mocked by Donald Trump*, N.Y. TIMES (Sept. 27, 2016), https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/28/us/politics/alicia-machado-donald-trump.html [https://perma.cc/6P2X-TX6Y].

29. Scott Detrow, *In Post-Debate Interview, Trump Again Criticizes Pageant-Winner's Weight*, NPR (Sept. 27, 2016, 8:45 AM), https://www.npr.org/2016/09/27/495611105/in-post-debate-interview-trump-again-criticizes-pageant-winners-weight [https://perma.cc/A4BM-BKAY].

30. *See* Deena Zaru, *The Donald Trump-Rosie O'Donnell Feud: A Timeline*, CNN, https://www.cnn.com/2015/08/07/politics/donald-trump-rosie-odonnell-feud/index.html (last updated Aug. 14, 2017, 2:53 PM) [https://perma.cc/2A7U-JA5P].

31. *See* Alan Feuer, *What We Know About Trump's $130,000 Payment to Stormy Daniels*, N.Y. TIMES (Aug. 27, 2018), https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/27/nyregion/stormy-daniels-trump-payment.html [https://perma.cc/35HT-7RD8].

32. *See* Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump), TWITTER (Oct. 16, 2018, 8:04 AM), https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1052213711295930368 [https://perma.cc/2KRX-XBBX].

33. Michael D. Shear & Eileen Sullivan, *Trump Calls Omarosa Manigault Newman "That Dog" in His Latest Insult*, N.Y. TIMES (Aug. 14, 2018), https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/14/us/politics/trump-omarosa-dog.html [https://perma.cc/HN4E-RC9K].

debate.[34] And *MSNBC* journalist and host Mika Brzezinski was "bleeding badly from a face-lift."[35] Although it is good for animals to be groomed, Trump does not want to see the signs of grooming in his presence.

Sometimes when Donald Trump praises women, it is almost worse than his criticisms. Some praise is still directed at women as if they were animals, just pretty ones that do not bleed, do not criticize, and look the right way. Any notion that women have something to contribute beyond loyalty and subservience is lost. His idea of public service for women puts the emphasis on service with a smile.

There is a woman, one notable public figure, one notable political opponent who criticized Trump, who has managed to avoid these kinds of criticisms. She was born in 1940. Her hair, nails, clothing, and demeanor all match that of an ideal woman from 1946. She is Nancy Pelosi. But if Trump could not describe her in terms normally reserved for animals, she did earn another direction of attack. She is "nasty."[36]

II. NASTY WOMEN/CRIMINALS

President Trump clearly believes that some women do not belong in public life. They do not belong in the home, either. They are not Americans. They hate America. They are nasty. They belong in prison, or they should be deported. It is his job to vanquish them. Trump has used terms like "nasty" to describe many men as well, including his male political rivals and detractors, but he does not call for these men to be locked up. Indeed, he sometimes used the term "nasty" in admiration of men who he considered to be paragons of toughness and breakers of norms like General George Patton.[37]

Nancy Pelosi recently joined this field, after Trump spent the first two years of his presidency avoiding direct, personal attacks on her, and even complimenting her return to the position of Speaker of the House of

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34. *See* Ryan Teague Beckwith, *Trump: Debate Moderator Had "Blood Coming Out of Her Wherever"*, TIME (Aug. 7, 2015), https://time.com/3989652/donald-trump-megyn-kelly-blood-wherever/ [https://perma.cc/H4LX-QNP2].

35. Glenn Thrush & Maggie Haberman, *Trump Mocks Mika Brzezinski; Says She Was "Bleeding Badly from a Face-Lift"*, N.Y. TIMES (June 29, 2017), https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/29/business/media/trump-mika-brzezinski-facelift.html [https://perma.cc/A6K6-C4WL].

36. Quinn, *supra* note 1.

37. Aaron Blake, *"Nasty" is Trump's Insult of Choice for Women, but He Uses It Plenty on Men, Too*, WASH. POST (Aug. 21, 2019, 4:53 PM), https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/08/21/nasty-is-trumps-insult-choice-women-he-uses-it-plenty-men-too/ [https://perma.cc/MFX5-54MY].

Representatives following the 2018 midterm elections.[38] The President still does not know how to handle the speaker, but Trump labelled her nasty for the first time in 2019. The attack on Pelosi came after a report surfaced in June 2019 in which the speaker stated she believed that the Mueller Report alone was insufficient grounds for impeaching the President—which surely would have pleased President Trump—but that Pelosi would be happy to see the President in jail after his presidency when he was prosecuted for an array of crimes. When Trump was told of this, he exclaimed: "I've tried to be nice to her because I would've liked to have gotten some deals done. She's incapable of doing deals. She's a nasty, vindictive, horrible person."[39]

Translation: *I didn't treat her like an animal because I wanted to make some deals in Congress. But she can't make deals. And she is a nasty person.* It does not matter how logic flows in the mind of Donald Trump—he offers an alternative to Descartes, because he tweets, therefore he is—but is Nancy Pelosi a nasty woman because she didn't make deals? Or was she unable to make deals because she was nasty?

Pelosi is a newcomer to the ranks of women as nasty, terrible, horrible, no good, very bad criminals.[40] The woman who is the unquestioned champion of crime is Hillary Clinton. Trump called her nasty during a presidential debate in 2016[41]; he called her "Crooked Hillary" so often during the campaign that he probably collects royalties on the phrase. Trump was not just attacking her. He was defending his vision of America—his vision of politics—from an evil woman. Is there anything more reminiscent of fascism—something that had normally been on the edges of American political culture—than Trump's crossing his arms at campaign rallies, smiling while the crowd thunders "lock her up"?[42]

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38. Rachael Bade, *Why Trump Has Spared Pelosi from His Personal Vitriol—So Far*, POLITICO (Jan. 2, 2019, 5:04 AM), https://www.politico.com/story/2019/01/02/trump-pelosi-relationship-government-shutdown-1077193 [https://perma.cc/2YFT-MKB8].

39. Stephen Collinson, *Trump Escalates Pelosi Duel as He Ends UK Trip*, CNN (June 7, 2019, 9:40 AM), https://www.cnn.com/2019/06/07/politics/donald-trump-mexico-politics-dday-britain-immigration/index.html [https://perma.cc/WMC8-NSM3].

40. This thought was inspired by children's book author Judith Viorst, whose characters seem to share the same diction as the President. *See generally* JUDITH VIORST, ALEXANDER AND THE TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE, NO GOOD, VERY BAD DAY (2018).

41. Tessa Berenson, *Watch Donald Trump Call Hillary Clinton a "Nasty Woman"*, TIME (Oct. 19, 2016), https://time.com/4537960/donald-trump-hillary-clinton-nasty-woman-debate/ [https://perma.cc/JXL3-KJX9].

42. Jeremy Diamond, *Trump on "Lock Her Up" Chant: "I'm Starting to Agree"*, CNN (July 29, 2016), https://www.cnn.com/2016/07/29/politics/donald-trump-lock-her-up/index.html [https://perma.cc/43R4-FBJW].

Besides Pelosi and Clinton, there are a few honorable mentions in Trump's Nasty Hall of Fame. Elizabeth Warren is—in Trump's view—nasty.[43] What would he call her if they ever shared the same stage? Would he allow a transition of power to a "nasty" woman like Elizabeth Warren?

And then there is "The Squad": Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez from New York, Ilhan Omar from Minnesota, Ayanna Pressley from Massachusetts, and Rashida Tlaib from Michigan. Four new members of Congress, four women of color, four progressives. There are so many reasons not to call them "Young Turks"—although Trump might treat them better if he thought they were Turkish. His hatred and disgust reached its peak in a July 2019 campaign rally, urging the Squad to "go back and help fix the totally broken and crime infested places from which they came."[44]

During the July rally in North Carolina, Trump even questioned whether Pressley is "in any way related to Elvis"[45]—what was supposed to be a hilarious joke that an African American woman is related to the King, although the President perhaps forgets that Elvis's daughter did marry Michael Jackson. It is questionably funny when someone questions the family roots of a black woman at the same time he questions her patriotism and calls for her to leave the country. It is funny to the President, however, and another contribution to the coarsened political culture of his presidency.

He piled on, noting that the members of "The Squad" were all "so angry," obviously problematic for women. They were probably stuck that way, despite his hopes for their reform and return to feminine decency: "They were trying to be nice, but it's hard." And to add insult to insult, he singled-out Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez as "Cortez," explaining: "I don't have time to go with three different names."[46] This was during a ninety-minute campaign speech. It is a nice double-rainbow of insults—diminishing Ocasio-Cortez by mocking the Spanish tradition of hyphenated surnames, as well as spitting out the word "Cortez" to remind the crowd that she is, indeed, Hispanic. Ocasio is a far less common and less recognizable surname—racism calls for less subtlety.

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43. *See* Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump), TWITTER (June 10, 2016, 8:07 AM), https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/741240449906663424 [https://perma.cc/MZ7N-62WW] ("Pocahontas is at it again! Goofy Elizabeth Warren, one of the least productive U.S. Senators, has a nasty mouth. Hope she is V.P. choice.").

44. John Fritze, *Trump Slams "Squad" During North Carolina Rally as Crowd Chants "Send Her Back"*, USA TODAY (July 17, 2019, 6:53 PM), https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2019/07/17/donald-trump-rally-greenville-n-c-amid-fury-over-squad-tweets/1749987001/ [https://perma.cc/968Z-2MPR].

45. *Id.*

46. *Id.*

As to where she should go back, perhaps it could be Spain if we trace her lineage back several hundred years, or to Puerto Rico, where her mother was born, or the Bronx where her father was born. All of these places fit the Trumpian profile of "shitholes," Trump's basic description of places whose people should not be allowed to immigrate to America. It is likely that Donald Trump thinks places like the Bronx and Puerto Rico—as well as Baltimore and the Southside of Chicago—are "shithole" countries.

The ugliness culminated in a North Carolina rally in which the crowd chanted "send her back" when Trump talked about Representative Ilhan Omar of Minnesota in particular. A "nasty" woman, a black woman, and a Muslim woman: a trifecta of un-American characteristics.[47]

There is a long list of women who live outside America who are on this list. Duchess Meghan Markle was dubbed as "nasty" when Trump found out about her 2016 comments criticizing Trump for his misogyny. His response was misogynistic: "I didn't know that she was nasty."[48]

The Danish prime minster, Mette Frederiksen, who called Trump's plan to buy Greenland "absurd," was quickly labeled nasty. Trump stated:

> I thought that the prime minister's statement, that it was "absurd," that it was "an absurd idea," it was nasty, I thought it was an inappropriate statement. All she had to do is say "no, we wouldn't be interested, but we can't treat the United States of America the way they treated us under President Obama." She's not talking to me, she's talking to the United States of America. You don't talk to the United States that way.[49]

So, is Trump more of a Hobbesian Leviathan, or a Louis XIV (I am the state, "L'état c'est moi")? And I guess America was a black man when Obama was president? And wait? What did Denmark do to us? Was there a Hans Christian Andersen tariff?

Why do these things matter? Well, they are clearly undermining our standing in the world. The President did not just lash out, he cancelled a planned meeting with Denmark.[50] Perhaps the greatest moment of John F. Kennedy's presidency came at a moment when he showed respect and

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47. *Id.*

48. Karen Alaimo, *Why Trump Keeps Calling Women "Nasty"*, CNN (Aug. 21, 2019, 4:38 PM), https://www.cnn.com/2019/06/01/opinions/trumps-meghan-markle-nasty-proves-her-point-alaimo/index.html [https://perma.cc/E4YL-DBQT].

49. Matt Korade & Adam Edelman, *Trump Calls Danish PM "Nasty" for Her Comments on Greenland Sale*, NBC NEWS (Aug. 21, 2019, 10:49 AM), https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/danish-pm-says-she-was-surprised-learn-trump-canceled-trip-n1044771 [https://perma.cc/3BHS-8LE8].

50. *Id.*

empathy for the people of West Germany in Berlin, a huge victory in the Cold War.[51] Trump's conduct was more like an emotional middle school student than the leader of the world at a time when the old order is breaking down and American leadership is needed more than ever. Then again, he has long signaled his desire to take his ball and go home.

III. WOMEN AS THE OPPOSITE OF "VERY HAPPY YOUNG GIRLS"

To Trump, the women he targets have denied themselves the true female essence that they knew when they were "very happy young girls." This connection was made clear when the President mocked Greta Thunberg, the teenage climate activist. Following Thunberg's impassioned, angry speech to the United Nations that rocked world leaders in their seats and galvanized an international movement of millions, Trump tweeted: "She seems like a very happy young girl looking forward to a bright and wonderful future. So nice to see!"[52]

A young woman is becoming a global leader before our eyes. Trump could only mock her. But he had to, since in his estimation she was speaking nonsense about a nonsense issue in the angry tone of a nervous woman. Global warming is only a theory to the President (so are evolution and gravity). It's not a fact to the President, like Ukrainians hiding the Democratic Party server, or George Soros paying for a caravan of ISIS immigrants (neither of these are facts).

President Trump spoke to the participants of the first all-female spacewalk in history. Trump did one of the most basic tasks of a president in the modern era—say something nice, honor a Medal of Honor recipient, acknowledge a Little League championship team. Trump—reading from a script that was perhaps prepared by the same person who "transcribed" his call to the Ukrainian president—said that these were the first women to ever go on a spacewalk.[53] Then—talking to two women who were in space, whose jobs require incredible mental and physical strength—said: "You're right now on television all over the world, so don't get nervous."[54] Trump was the comfortable host, someone who doesn't get nervous. Although he was told by an aide that the conversation was not

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51. *See generally* ROBERT DALLEK, AN UNFINISHED LIFE: JOHN F. KENNEDY, 1917–1963 (1st ed. 2003).

52. Lyons, *supra* note 2.

53. Morgan McFall-Johnsen, *2 Female Astronauts Politely Corrected Trump Midspacewalk After the President Made a Galling Error*, BUS. INSIDER (Oct. 18, 2019, 6:03 PM), https://www.businessinsider.com/trump-incorrectly-says-astronauts-first-women-spacewalk-2019-10 [https://perma.cc/Q5U8-DUXJ].

54. *Id.*

simultaneous because they were in space, Trump then talked over their responses. Neither astronaut—Christina Koch or Jessica Meir—got nervous. Meir, who was doing her first-ever spacewalk, responded: "We don't want to take too much credit because there have been many other female spacewalkers before us."[55] Meir continued:

> This is just the first time that there have been two women outside at the same time, and it's really interesting for us. We've talked a lot about it up here, you know, for us, this is really just us doing our jobs. It's something we've been training for for six years. . . .
>
> . . . .
>
> . . . We do, of course, want to give credit to all of those that came before us. There has been a long line of female scientists, explorers, engineers, and astronauts, and we have followed in their footsteps to get us where we are today. We hope that we can provide an inspiration to everybody, not only women, but to everybody that has a dream, that has a big dream and is willing to work hard to make that dream come true.[56]

These two women, despite the President's condescension, clearly have the right stuff.

Trump was oblivious, talking about his bold plan to go to Mars—ironically where men are from—remembering to return to the "brave and brilliant women" that the moment was supposed to be about.[57] He added that he hoped the two astronauts [had] a good time."[58] Because that's what women should do. They should be like very happy young women, having a good time.

Following this discussion of actual women in the sky, the conclusion will focus on more celestial beings: angels.

CONCLUSION

Angel is another word that the President has given his own definition. President Trump has recently discussed his abandoning of our Kurdish allies in Syria with a reminder that they were "no angels."[59] He mockingly

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55. *Id.*

56. *Id.*

57. Tariq Malik, *Trump Hails NASA Astronauts on 1st All-Woman Spacewalk in History*, SPACE.COM (Oct. 18, 2019), https://www.space.com/trump-hails-first-all-woman-spacewalk.html [https://perma.cc/D87E-TH5A].

58. *Id.*

59. Philip Bump, *Trump's Indifferent to New Fighting in Syria: "There's a Lot of Sand There That They Can Play With"*, WASH. POST (Oct, 16, 2019, 2:15 PM),

added, in reference to the conflict that will follow the U.S. withdrawal of support from our Kurdish allies and could come to involve Kurds, Turks, Syrians, and Russians, that at least "[t]here's a lot of sand they can play with."[60] The following day, at a campaign rally, he described the coming conflict between the ethnic cleansing forces of President Erdogan of Turkey and our former Kurdish allies—with a metaphor for parenting right out of 1946: "Like two kids in a lot, you've got to let them fight and then you pull them apart."[61] One gets a sense that young Trump did a lot of beating of other kids while teachers and other authority figures looked the other way. Or one actually feels a stab of pity for the children of the president and their Social Darwinian childhoods.

Trump used a different set of euphemisms in another high-profile instance of where he called for his own brand of justice. The Central Park Five, children who were coerced into confessions, were the subject of citizen Trump's entrance into our political culture.[62] He took out an advertisement in the New York newspapers calling for a return of the death penalty.[63] Even then he knew the power of inflammatory advertisements to generate far more return than the cost. Years later, after the five were released and given a multimillion-dollar settlement, Trump was unrepentant, noting that they were "no angels."[64]

So, who are angels? Are they biblical figures who bring fiery destruction to sinful cities or tidings of great joy depending on the context? No, not in Trumpspeak. Are they five black and Hispanic teenagers in New York, or a Kurdish community of millions in Syria? Clearly, no—he explicitly excludes them. Angels—in Donald Trump's worldview—are dead children.[65]

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https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/10/16/trumps-indifferent-new-fighting-syria-theres-lot-sand-there-that-they-can-play-with/ [https://perma.cc/3GJW-U8DQ].

60. *Id.*

61. Philip Rucker and Jenna Johnson, *Trump on Turks and Kurds: "Like Two Kids in a Lot, You've Got to Let Them Fight"*, WASH. POST (Oct. 17, 2019), https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-on-turks-and-kurds-like-two-kids-in-a-lot-youve-got-to-let-them-fight/2019/10/17/bf37283c-f0eb-11e9-b648-76bcf86eb67e_story.html [https://perma.cc/8T5Q-QV7N].

62. *See* Bump, *supra* note 60.

63. *Id.*

64. *Id.*

65. Tara Golshan, *Trump Keeps Highlighting "Angel Moms" to Make the Case for His Immigration Agenda*, VOX (Feb. 15, 2019, 11:14 AM), https://www.vox.com/2019/2/5/18213132/trump-angel-moms [https://perma.cc/P4ER-8THM].

Perhaps the single most important phrase for Donald Trump, tying together all of his impulses, is "angel moms."[66] It has not gotten the same attention because he tends to use it in person rather than in tweets, and uses it with grieving women in the audience or on the stage of his rallies.[67] These are the mothers of children who have died because of what he calls "illegal aliens."[68] The causes vary from accidents to murder, but the formula is always the same. A dead child is an angel, and the "angel mom" must be remembered. It is a theology of vengeance. It is also an image of women as being lost, with only men capable of restoring the natural order.[69]

But Trump's use of a dead child as an angel also gets to the heart of what a woman should be. She is not the angel. She plays a role, and she can serve, and sometimes she must be punished, or comforted, or protected, or avenged. But her thoughts, her actions, all are secondary. She is the political arena in which men offer their competing visions of America. She is our body politic.

As long as the discussion has shifted to angels, there are two other angelic references in American political culture that offer a competing vision to Trump. But even these references require darkness before they offer light.

Perhaps the most important person to consider when thinking about Donald Trump is Roy Cohn. Cohn would earn his fame—infamy—working with Joseph McCarthy with a message of virulent anti-communism that transcended reason or evidence. Even before his work with McCarthy, Cohn helped secure the death penalty for the Rosenbergs.[70] Cohn was one of the inspirations for Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*,[71] a magnificent two-part play that looked at America through the lens of Cohn, of AIDS, of conservative politics, and of the choices and burdens of women. Kushner's angels might be fever dreams and might be divine revelation. But there is an actual, physical angel. She is the Angel Bethesda, a massive statue in Central Park. According to the Bible, a pool in Temple Square in Jerusalem that had been touched by the

66. *Id.*

67. *Id.*

68. *Id.*

69. *See id.*

70. Albin Krebs, *Roy Cohn, Aide to McCarthy and Fiery Lawyer, Dies at 59*, N.Y. TIMES (Aug. 3, 1986), https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/080386sci-aids.html [https://perma.cc/397Y-HNSL].

71. TONY KUSHNER, ANGELS IN AMERICA: A GAY FANTASIA ON NATIONAL THEMES (1st rev. combined ed. 2013).

Angel Bethesda had the power to heal. The pool ran dry when the Romans destroyed the Temple. But some believe that God will see that the Temple is rebuilt someday, and the pool will flow again, and the power to heal will return. It is a vision that is religious in origin but shared by an unusual group of friends from different faith traditions as well as atheists. A group that shared almost nothing in common politically, culturally, or socioeconomically. But they shared a vision of American political culture—of human healing and reconciliation shared by believers and non-believers, in a nation where all creeds and colors and backgrounds are given a voice, and maybe a chance for a miracle.

Here are the final lines of *Angels in America*, as several main characters gather by the angel and the fountain on a cold, bright day:

> The fountain's not flowing now, they turn it off in the winter, ice in the pipes. But in the summer it's a sight to see. I want to be around to see it. I plan to be. I hope to be.
>
> This disease will be the end of many of us, but not nearly all, and the dead will be commemorated and will struggle on with the living, and we are not going away. We won't die secret deaths anymore. The world only spins forward. We will be citizens. The time has come.
>
> Bye now.
>
> You are fabulous creatures, each and every one.
>
> And I bless you: *More Life*.
>
> The Great Work Begins.[72]

Trump also likes to tell black audiences that Abraham Lincoln was a Republican,[73] as well as letting them know that blacks did a lot to help build America.[74] Most African Americans are probably aware of their history. But President Trump probably misses the point that Abraham Lincoln's greatest legacy was not his party identification, but his keeping our nation together even as it was tearing itself apart, his dreaming of a

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72. *Id.* at 290.

73. Sidney Blumenthal, *Trump's Increasingly Weird Attempts to Compare Himself to Lincoln*, NEW YORKER (Oct. 24, 2019), https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/trumps-increasingly-weird-attempts-to-compare-himself-to-lincoln [https://perma.cc/4K5C-9PYN].

74. Nolan D. McCaskill, *"You Built the Nation": Trump Courts Black Voters in White House Mini-Rally*, POLITICO (Oct. 4, 2019, 8:22 PM), https://www.politico.com/news/2019/10/04/trump-black-voters-white-house-mini-rally-029858 [https://perma.cc/PKD5-UN8L].

future when we would come together again.[75] The final words of his first inaugural, spoken in 1861, with the near certainty that war was coming, are a fitting way to end a discussion of American political culture.

> I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.[76]

The angels of Tony Kushner and Abraham Lincoln: supernatural reminders of our common American humanity, and historical reminders of our shared American culture. Sexuality, gender, race, politics, class, region—all still exist to Kushner and Lincoln, but they fade in significance when we hear the clarion angelic call that we are all Americans. The Angels of Kushner and Lincoln will provide us a space in our political culture for women to be Americans again.

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75. *See generally* STEPHEN B. OATES, WITH MALICE TOWARD NONE: THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN (2009).

76. Abraham Lincoln, First Inaugural Address (Mar. 4, 1861), https://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/lincoln1.asp [https://perma.cc/F64D-6ZET].